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### Accent on Accessories

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# *Accent on Accessories*



COOPERATIVE EXTENSION SERVICE  
SOUTH DAKOTA STATE UNIVERSITY  
U. S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE



# Accent on Accessories

by ELIZABETH K. EASTON, extension clothing specialist

Good taste: the right clothes for the right occasion on the right person.

The well-dressed woman knows a wardrobe of a few carefully chosen clothes emphasizing style, use, and quality is less expensive, easier to care for, and more complimentary to her personality than a large collection of less style and quality. She believes that variety in dress may be achieved by using accessories to express her personality, emphasize her good features, and minimize her poor ones.

*It's the collection of little things—hats, scarves, handbags, shoes, jewelry, and hosiery—each designed to add sparkle to one's appearance, that make the wearer and the costume more attractive. Accessories help achieve a feeling of dominance in line, division of space, color, and texture. They are the finishing touches which "dress" the dress, suit, or other costume and make it "yours."*

The well-dressed woman pays a great deal of attention to her accessories. She plans one attention-getter for each costume. She inspects her wardrobe and decides what would look best with each outfit. She considers scale in relation to her size. She harmonizes color and design with her wardrobe and recognizes cost in relation to total clothing expenditure.

## Fashion, Style, Fad

Accessories may be in the category of *fashion*, *style*, or *fad*. *Fashion* is the *style* that is popular at the moment. The individual who follows the newest fashions is said to be fashionable or "in vogue."

One who chooses her clothing and accessories so they are distinctive and increase her attractiveness is described as having *style*. The woman who employs judgment and skill in adapting the best in fashion to her own needs may obtain true elegance and distinction. "*High style*" is the newest fashion and is the unusual and generally expensive article only a few can afford. A classic style such as the black dress, the plain pump, or the string of pearls, may be worn year after year.

*Fads* are styles or tricks that are fashion for a short time and adopted by only a few. Some fads are practical but often they downgrade ones appearance.

## How-To-Do-It

Selecting costumes comes naturally from some, but most people need to study, practice, and correct their mistakes before they can choose clothes and accessories with confidence. Some knowledge of the basic elements of *design* can save money, time, and energy, and give satisfaction to wardrobe planning. The basic elements of design: *line, shape, form, space, texture, and color*.

*Harmony* is the ultimate goal in dressing by design. It produces a feeling which predominates the theme expressed by the wearer and her clothes. *Proportion, balance, rhythm, and emphasis*, combined successfully, give harmony in the costume.

*Proportion* indicates pleasing space relationships. When correct proportions are used in assembling a costume, the less important details are correctly subordinated to the most important ones.

*Balance* gives a restful effect where there is equal attraction on either side of a center. There are two types of balance: formal—the same interest on either side of an imaginary center, and informal—unlike interest on either side of an imaginary center.

*Rhythm* is organized movement and is achieved through continuity or repetition of line, shape, color, or textures, or the gradation of these elements. It leads the eye with ease and power to the point of interest.

*Emphasis* is that quality which attracts attention. It is the result of line, form, and color assembled either by concentration, repetition, or contrast. It's the element that makes fashion items "smart."

## Color

Color can be the cue that makes the wardrobe click. Choose whatever color is becoming, but keep in mind that dark and dull colors make an object, including the human figure, appear smaller, while light and bright values of almost all colors create a feeling of greater size.

Colors may *match, contrast, or blend*. In a *matching* ensemble the same color is worn from top to toe to achieve a smooth look. The dress color—slightly



darker or lighter—can be repeated in accessories with just a twinkle of jewelry or other tiny extra color touch. In a *contrasting* color scheme an accent color entirely different from the dress—one much lighter or darker—is chosen. For a *blend* look for two accessory colors that contain the same basic color as the dress but are tinged with another. For example, wear green and blue-green with blue. In each case one special accessory is chosen to lift the look out of the ordinary class.

Brightly colored top garments call for subdued accessories. A pleasing effect is achieved when one color is emphasized in one center of interest and all other areas of accessory color are kept as supporting interest or background. If brightly colored bag and shoes are chosen, wear with dark colors, neutrals, or harmonizing pastels. If a brilliant hat is worn with a dark dress, keep other accessories dark with matching or neutral gloves. If more than two brightly colored matching accessories are worn at one time the effect is usually spotty. One brightly colored accessory is often smarter than two others harmonizing in color.

Before buying accessories, try them with the costume they are to compliment.

## Number of Accessories

The number of accessories one chooses to wear depends on the type of accessory, the costume, the activity in which one is participating, and the personality and physical characteristics of the wearer.

How does one decide when her costume is satisfactorily accessorized? Follow this simple exercise: Put on a basic dress and study yourself in the mirror. You

have no shoes, no hat, no jewelry, no belt—nothing but the basic dress. Study the lines, the color, the texture, the silhouette. Now, gradually add accessories . . . one at a time . . . beginning with shoes. And don't overlook cosmetics!

You will soon reach a point where you will be very satisfied with what you see, or you may be overwhelmed by your creation—suddenly the acces-

sories rather than you have become the focal point. Since accessories are intended to improve your attractiveness, you have defeated your purpose. Remove what you have added . . . piece by piece . . . until you

return to a point where your personal features become more apparent.

Now you have attained the goal of accessories—to create a total picture rather than an outstanding feature. Even basic accessories like shoes should contribute to the whole picture by blending line, color and texture.



## Shoes

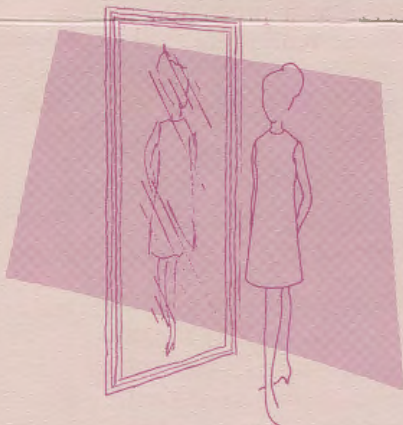
According to some fashion experts, shoes are another index to the taste and personality of the individual. Shoes are worn at least two-thirds of each day, and the average person walks eight miles. If this is true, it is essential that shoes not only fit the physical structure of the foot but fit fashion needs as well.

Proper fit, good construction, design suited to activity, and simple smart lines in inconspicuous colors will give the wardrobe a beautiful stepping off point and help the wearer toward a happier outlook on life. The most versatile of all shoe designs suited to most costumes and activities is the plan pump of suede or smooth leather in a heel height most comfortable for the wearer.

## Handbags

Handbags are functional, as well as decorative, and should be both simultaneously. A simply designed bag scaled to the individual will be appropriate for year around use. Smooth-textured leather and simulated leather are most versatile but tend to show wear more quickly than rough textures. Patent, while considered all-season, creates a more harmonious effect with lighter weight clothing.

Choose a handbag design suited to the figure; avoid shapes and lines that call attention to any extremes in body build. Make the handbag a pleasing part of the total look. When selecting a bag, view it in a full length mirror, holding it as it would be carried in actual use. Note its proportion, shape, color, and texture.





## Hats

Hats can be youthful or aging, gay, fantastic, or conservative. They can make a costume dressy, tailored, dowdy, or smart. Hats can flatter or detract from your appearance. If you have but one hat, it should be designed and made from a fabric that will look well with dresses, coats, and suits. A softly tailored felt or velvet may be ideal. If your budget allows for several hats, choose them with specific occasions in mind.

The hat provides a frame for the face so make it becoming and harmonious with face shape, skin texture, and hair style. Make the hat minimize your poor features and accent your good ones. Take a good look in the mirror . . . be honest, try to see yourself fairly. Study the shape of your face, look at your hairline, examine your profile. Once you know your facial shape, your good and bad points, it will be easier to select the right hat, arrange your hair becomingly, and apply makeup correctly. And remember—hat and hair must compliment each other. Mature women and those with irregular features will find hats more becoming if a considerable amount of hair is allowed to show.

Avoid repetition of predominant lines in the face when choosing hats. For example, a square face is flattered by irregular lines in a hat. Curving lines add beauty and soften the angular lines of the face.

Avoid selecting a hat that repeats a bad line—don't let a hat brim repeat a too-long nose or the up-turn of a too-tilted nose. Neither let a wide brim accent a too-thick neck or a symmetrical hat accent a crooked nose.

A hat also does more than provide a suitable

frame for the face. It's just as important to consider its proportion or balance with the figure and the other parts of the costume. Always try on a hat with the costume with which it will be worn. If it will be worn with a coat at times, try it on with the coat before making a final decision.

A hat should be lady-like, lend dignity, charm, and distinction, and give importance to the eyes of the wearer. Color should harmonize with the rest of the costume but not necessarily match—it may be better if it does not. **Scarves and gloves "go with" the hat.**

As the seasons change, so do the creations of the designers, but whatever the fashion, choose a hat which makes you look fashionable.



## Gloves

Custom and etiquette call for gloves on most business and social occasions. Gloves are a symbol of dignity, and while some occasions warrant going without a hat, gloves are worn to indicate that one has finished dressing. **And gloves are to be worn, not carried.**

Gloves may be of different type fabrics, depending on their use. If they are to contribute a note of smartness to one's appearance, gloves should be simple in design and pleasing in color but never conspicuous.

Contrasting textures in gloves and costumes are effective. For example, kid or leather gloves look smart with woolen garments.

When gloves match a brightly colored hat, the eye is held within the boundary lines of the matching colors. It is better to allow the eye to move out and away by harmonizing the colors.

Short gloves are suitable for regular and daytime wear. If they are white glace kid they may be worn for evening, except for the most formal occasions.

Long and above-the-elbow gloves are appropriate for long formal gowns only.



## Scarves

Scarves give the costume a lift any hour of the day and are a must in every woman's wardrobe. Their delicate texture and beautiful colors glamorize facial features and natural coloring, serve as a protection to other clothing and to the skin, and tend to unify the colors within a costume. Fashion in scarves changes frequently, but their usefulness goes on and on.

## Jewelry

Jewelry is the accent which may emphasize personal coloring or highlight the costume. To be dressed in good taste, minimize your jewelry and wear only as much as your costume can carry smartly. One piece is sufficient to accent a simple costume.

When more than one piece of jewelry is worn, be sure the pieces are related in texture and type. If gold is used in one piece it should appear in the others.



Gold and silver may be combined in the same design, but they clash when used in separate pieces.

For street or travel wear pearls, enamel, porcelain, jet, plain gold or silver—not glistening stones. Save those for evening wear only!

Metal jewelry is versatile and suited to many fabrics. But, the distinctive color tones of metals cause them to combine more handsomely with some colors than with others. Costume colors with underlying gold tones are more beautifully highlighted with gold than with silver. Silver accents enhance fabrics with blue or violet tones. Black, navy, purple, and blue-reds are equally complimented with gold, silver, or copper.

Natural skin coloring also affects the metal in your jewelry. The woman with “peaches and cream” skin can wear all metal jewelry well. Pinkish tones, however, are enhanced by copper or silver. Definite yellow tones in the skin are made more pleasing by wearing gold or copper.

Look for modern and conventionalized pieces rather than naturalistic designs when selecting costume jewelry.

elaborate watches or eyeglasses should wear little other jewelry.

Belts, buttons, and buckles serve dual purposes, too. If they are decorative in nature, limit other pieces of jewelry accordingly.

A handkerchief is functional but also may be a smart accessory when carried inside ones purse. The best choice is plain, tailored, of sufficient size, and preferably of linen or fine lawn.

## Remember . . .

*Fashion* is something we can buy, but *style* is created by the individual through the things she wears. The woman who chooses her accessories wisely has the satisfaction and self-assurance of being well dressed. She need not shop at the most exclusive places nor wear labels from the best fashion houses. She knows herself, her needs, her coloring, her size, her wardrobe. She has used design principles in choosing her accessories and she has planned them to give her costumes and herself a lift. She has worked at it, she has used practice and imagination, she has spent her time and energy wisely for she knows these are the things accessories can do for her:

- *Make an outfit more becoming*
- *Create a spot of interest*
- *Add accent*
- *Make an ensemble multi-purpose*
- *Up-date an outfit*
- *Express individuality*
- *Be the “spice” of the wardrobe*
- *Complete an outfit for a particular occasion*

## Miscellaneous Items

Wristwatches and eyeglasses are functional rather than fashion items, but some have been so elaborately designed that they have taken on a fashion look in the character of accessories. The woman who chooses

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